



Central Intelligence Agency
Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence

19 June 1986

NOTE TO: NIO/LA

SUBJECT: DCI Talking Points dated 19 June 1986

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I am struck by the slant placed on these talking points. I appreciate the nature of the audience, but I think you have been a little overly selective in this particular set. From my point of view, it doesn't look like good intelligence. The case is good enough without being too selective and pointed. My real concern is that we hang the DCI out a bit too far when we give him material like this.

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NIO/LA
19 June 1986

DCI TALKING POINTS

The Situation in Nicaragua

I would like to review for you quickly the major trends that have been occurring in the anti-Communist insurgency in Nicaragua over the past six months. The first and most prominent trend is the increased Soviet role in Nicaragua.

There is a variety of evidence that the Soviet Union has significantly stepped up its support for the Sandinista counterinsurgency effort.

A Soviet AN-30 photo reconnaissance aircraft has been identified in Nicaragua for the first time, apparently taking photographs of insurgent bases in Honduras and helping in the preparation of new maps of the northern border area.

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- The Soviet decision to base a reconnaissance aircraft in Nicaragua is a bold escalation of Soviet involvement there and could set a precedent for a greater Soviet role. The AN-30 carries Soviet markings and is flown by Soviet crews.

In addition to photo reconnaissance support, the Soviets have stepped up military deliveries to Nicaragua this year.

- A Soviet ship which arrived in Corinto on 13 May delivered about 100 shipping containers [redacted] after a long trip around South America.

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- Another Soviet ship appears to have delivered five MI-8 or MI-17 helicopters to Nicaragua recently. This would bring the total provided so far this year to at least 10, and we know that several more helicopters are already on their way.

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- Soviet military deliveries in the first five months of 1986 have already exceeded the total tonnage provided in all of 1985.

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Finally, we have observed the deployment of three Soviet-style field hospitals in areas of heavy insurgent activity since early March.

- All are located adjacent to airstrips or helipads to assist the rapid evacuation of casualties.
- These forward field hospitals are in addition to two major Soviet military hospitals located in rear areas.
- Such hospitals are assisting Sandinista efforts to care for the increased number of casualties the regime has suffered since the beginning of the year.

This leads to a discussion of the second major trend in the war, the increased brutality of the conflict. The Sandinistas themselves have admitted that the war is escalating significantly in intensity.

- They admit that over 850 clashes have taken place from January through May.
- They claim to have inflicted over 2,500 casualties on the insurgents, an average of 17 per day.

- The Minister of Interior also claims to have rounded up and arrested over 1,500 insurgent collaborators, swelling the ranks of some 7,500 political prisoners already in Sandinista jails.
- While some of the Sandinista statistics may be exaggerated, there is no doubt that the war has become increasingly brutal for all concerned.

The increased Sandinista brutality comes at a time when the insurgents were scoring their most significant successes.

- Since late February, the insurgents have taken the offensive and have infiltrated over 10,000 men deep into northern, central, and southern Nicaragua.
- This offensive forced the Sandinistas to undertake their abortive attack on insurgent base camps in Honduras in late March.
- Since then, the Sandinistas have generally fallen back on a defensive line further in the interior, allowing the insurgents to operate relatively freely through much of northern and eastern Nicaragua.

But the increased Soviet commitment to Managua in recent months indicates that Moscow and the Sandinistas are determined to reverse the trends and seize the initiative from the insurgents.

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Can the US afford to stand by and watch the Soviets and Cubans assist the Sandinista efforts to crush all democratic opposition?

Can the US afford to watch the consolidation of another Communist regime on the Western Hemisphere?

Can the US afford to watch the construction of a new Soviet strategic base in Central America, close to both the Panama Canal and to the increasing restive state of Mexico, a country with a population that will reach 100 million people on our southern border by the year 2000?

I think the answer is obvious.